

MRS. MACFARLAN

GANGS DOON THE WATTER.

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FAIR-MONDAY was at hand, when Mrs. Macfarlan's promised fortnight at the coast would begin, and it was now expedient that the setting in order of the family wardrobe should be completed without further delay.

Johnny's "lum hat" was irretrievably lost, and a new hat was quite outside of the question. The general purse wouldn't allow of it at all. The most that Mrs. Macfarlan could do, by way of compromising the loss, was to buy a "cut o' worset" an' knit Johnny a braw new Tam o' Shanter according to promise. This she accordingly did, and on the Monday morning following Johnny was able to sport a grand Tam o' Shanter bannet, with a great red "toorie" on the top of it, and showing a general breadth of body which, if it did not exactly cover the whole of Johnny's numerous family, effectively covered at least his own head and shoulders.

"Weel, what think ye o' yer wife's handiwark, Johnny Macfarlan?" asked the author o' the new Tam o' Shanter the moment her husband had clapped it on his head.

"A perfect umbrella, Betty. A man could hide frae a shoo'r o' rain or a tax-gatherer under't. I hope the wind 'ill no flaff't aff my heid gaun doon in the steamer the day."

“Dod, ye maun watch that, Johnny. Yer lum hat was burnt the ither nicht, an’ it wad be a heart-breaking affair if yer new Tam o’ Shanter was to be droon’t.”

“Hum! it wad be a trifle waur if I was to be droon’t mysel’. Ye see, lass, it’s no the bannet, but the heid that’s in it. That’s a general truth; in my case it’s a particular truth,” and Johnny tapped his forehead, and smiled.

“In your case, Johnny, it’s no the bannet, but the turnip that’s in it,” quickly retorted Mrs. Macfarlan. “But, dod me, dinna let us waste ony mair time wranglin’ owre turnips an’ ither vegetables, Johnny, but rather see tae’t that the weans an’ a’thing are gettin’ ready for the road. There, see ye that; it’s half-past eight o’clock already, an’ the boat sails at ten! and me hisna on my bannet yet.”

“Only yae hale hour an’ a half yet!” sarcastically observed Johnny. “I could walk to Dumbarton in that time.”

“Oh, ay, fiddle-faddle aboot till we’re owre late for the boat! A bonnie like husband ye are! a fine helpmate atweel! See that you dinna try my temper ony faurer this mornin’, Johnny Macfarlan, or it’ll be the waur for ye.”

At this juncture Johnny got out his pipe, and deliberately prepared to fill it, in view of enjoying for five minutes a nerve-soothing smoke, the accidental sight of which put his worthy spouse into a perfect rage.

“Pit doon that lazy pipe this moment, Johnny Macfarlan, an’ tie that wean’s buits, or we’ll never see Rothesay this day,” she once more broke in, “an’ cut up thir twa loaves into slices for ‘pieces’ in the boat, an’ stuff them intae the portmanty alang wi’ the rest o’ the things; an’ dinna forget to tie up the three big umbrellas in yae bundle—ye can cairry them in yer oxter alang wi’ the lave—an’ get oot the perambulator; an’ dinna forget to pit Saturday’s *Weekly Mail* in yer pouch, for I hivna got time to read the stories yet, an’ Johnny——”

“Stop! stop! I’ll dae a’ that, Betty! I’ll dae a’ that!”

“An’ see that ye fix a buit lace to yer Tam o’ Shanter, an’ tie it through a button-hole, Johnny; an’ mair than that——”

“Yes, yes, Betty! the thing’s a’ richt; but, great Cæsar! gie me time to breathe. Faith, an’ the hen’ll wear the cock’s kame stiffly before I consent to flit to the saut watter again. I wudna gie a twa-hours ramble through the policies o’ auld Camlachie, wi’ the pipe in my cheek, an’ a yellow buttercup in my button-hole, for a’ the saut watter atween this an’ New York.”

“Camlachie here! Camlachie there!” snapped Mrs. Macfarlan, “get you yer parcels under yer airm, an’ set aff wi’ twa-three o’ the weans, or we’ll never, I tell ye, be in time to catch the boat.”

“Ay, ay,” answered Johnny, “come awa’, weans. Oh, no the hale o’ ye; five or six’ll dae,” and picking up his parcels, including the three tied-up umbrellas, the basket perambulator, and the baggy portmanty, Johnny set off forthwith, followed in pairs by some half-dozen of his rather numerous family brood.

“It’s a fine thing to be married,” thought Johnny to himself, as he trudged heavily on, preceded by the weans—Mrs. Macfarlan bringing up a formidable rear, “it’s a rale grand enterprising thing to be married.”

Following up her husband, Mrs. Macfarlan at length arrived at the Broomielaw, where she found Johnny in a dour “huff,” and asked him,—“What’s wrang noo?”

“Wrang, be hang’t!” retorted Johnny, “that infernal nichtcap ye’ve knitted me, to my sorrow, I fear, is faur frae being richt, whatever else is wrang! That’s a’ I’ve got to say!”

“An’ what’s the maitter wi’ the Tam o’ Shanter, if ye please, Mr. John Macfarlan, Esq.? Let me tell you this, ye never

look't brawer in yer born life, than ye dae in that same bannet o' my ain clever knittin'!"

"Wad ye believe this, Mrs. Elizabeth Macfarlan, Esq., when I was coming through St. Enoch Square there, a big loon of a cairter pointed at me wi' his whup, an' said to his neebor, 'D'ye mind yon, Jock: d'ye see Rab Roy in breeks!'"

"An' what o' that, Johnny?" sneered Mrs. Macfarlan

"Ay, an' a wee brat o' a laddie, a grocer's cadjer or something o' that kind, had the abominable impudence to ask me—'Wha stole my toorie?' Waur than a', when I put up my hand to feel for't he lauched like mad!"

"But yer toorie's no' stolen; it's on the tap of yer bannet yet, Johnny."

"Oh, hang you, Betty! Ye've nae perception o' satire ava'; woman, yer cabbage-headed!"

"An' is that a' ye're in the dour dumps for, Johnny Macfarlan?"

"Oh, ay, Mrs. Macfarlan, it's a' richt; I've gotten my twa e'en open't this day; I ken something I didna ken when I left the hoose half-an-hour ago!"

"Ay, an' what's that, if you please?"

"I got a full view o' mysel' five minutes ago! A thing I haena gotten for years. Ye don't ca' yon a lookin'-gless ye hae at hame, Betty?—a wee bit three-cornered scrap o' broken gless, about three inches square, tied up in a bit clout, an' hung frae a nail in the wa'! I was only able to see mysel' in bits at hame this mornin', but, haith, I've gotten a full view o' mysel' now, an' I've seen what the folks were a' glowerin' at me for. Nae wonder the cairter lad joked his neibor aboot Rab Roy in breeks, pointing contemptshously wi' his whup-shaft at me! The vera sicht o' me wad mak' an Englisher flee up a 'closs' to be safe oot o' my sicht, or pap doon on his knees an' pathetically plead for mercy."

"John Macfarlan, is this a' my thanks for sittin' up

to a' hours knittin' a Tam o' Shanter for ye, when I should by richts ha'e been sleepin' in my bed? But what's the meaning o' a' this bitter talk I canna understan'; yer a cruel-hearted man! that's what ye are!"

"Oh, ay, Betty, that's a' vera fine; but I saw mysel' ten minutes since, as I was sayin', and I got a big fricht, I can tell ye!"

"An' pray, whaur did ye see yersel' then?"

"In yin o' the Colosseum windows owre-bye in Jamaica Street," said Johnny, assuming as grave a countenance as the joke would allow of. "An' I can tell ye, that if my Tam o' Shanter measured an inch across the tap it covered nae less than fowr feet!"

"Is this oor boat?" curtly asked Mrs. Macfarlan, not condescending to further parley.

"Ay, Betty, this is oor boat," answered Johnny, moving promptly in the direction of the gangway, and presently they were all aboard—including the three tied-up umbrellas, the baggy portmanty, the "squealin'" basket perambulator, and alang wi' the rest—Johnny Macfarlan and his grand new Tam o' Shanter!

"Hullo, there, Betty, whaur are ye gaun? Woman, that's the cabin end ye're makin' for: this way for the steerage!"

Such was Johnny's salute as he turned about on stepping aboard the steamer and saw his worthy spouse making self-conscious tracks for the cabin. Mrs. Macfarlan, however, notwithstanding that she perfectly well heard her husband's warning, did not once deign to look round, but kept moving steadily cabinwards, quite like a lady accustomed to that semi-genteel latitude—ahem! Johnny glowered after her a moment like one bewildered. The cabin! what was in the mad woman's head? Stuffing the basket perambulator in among a lot of miscellaneous luggage lying on the bridge-deck, Johnny at once fixed on his auld specks, and with his

three tied-up umbrellas stuck under his arms, went off to recall to reason his extravagant wife.

The cabin was pretty well filled, and Johnny had some little difficulty in picking out from the rest his enterprising spouse. Very soon, however, he found her seated at the extreme end of the cabin—as far distant from the steerage as she could possibly get—with her face to the crowds that lined the quay, and her extensive family circle spread around her in very noticeable display. The picture was very highly interesting, and obviously only wanted the patriarchal-looking figure-head of Johnny himself to worthily complete the homogeneity of the general family photograph.

And that philosophic figure-head was not long awanting, Johnny was there presently with his specks on, and his three tied-up umbrellas tucked under his left arm.

“Mrs. Macfarlan,” he began, “are ye in yer seven sober senses?”

“Never was wicer in my life, Johnny,” was the sententious reply.

“Are ye aware that this is—the cabin?” his voice lowered to an awe-inspiring whisper.

“Quite aware o’ that, Johnny,” answered Mrs. Macfarlan.

“An’ are ye gaun to sail in the cabin? but no! it’s no possible!”

“Sit doon, man; sit doon an’ no mak’ a public fule o’ yersel.”

Johnny at once sat doon, and forthwith concluded in his own mind that the family purse was in a fatter condition than he had all along been led to believe, and that Betty was a “fly yin,” and could work him when she liked, “just like meal bannocks.”

“Weel, Betty,” he resumed after a pause, “I wisna anticipating a sail to Rothesay in the ‘cabin’ when I cam’ oot this mornin’.”



"We're no gaun to Rothesay in the cabin, since yer sae particular, Mr. Macfarlan."

"And what in the name o' common sense are ye daein' here, then? this is the cabin end, woman!"

"Man, ye're awfu' saft i' the heid. Talk about yer Tam o' Shanter bringin' ye intae ridicule. Man yer heid's no worthy o't; it's just covering a muckle turnip."

"Confound you for a trick! isn't this the cabin end?" stoutly persisted the worthy husband.

"Man, d'ye no ken yet, often as ye've been doon the Clyde, that they never lift the fares till they've left Dumbarton! Sit doon, Johnny, sit doon; a fine thing it wad be if somebody in the boat here, or amang the folks on the quay there, should see us packed like sheep in the steerage, an' should gang an' tell my twa but-an'-ben neibors, Mrs. Howdie, and Mrs. Draggletails about it; but if they hear o' us being seen sittin' in the cabin, fegs, that'll be something for the spitefu' jauds to chowe at their leisure."

"Faith, Betty, ye're a truly managin' woman! there's no a doot o' that! Cabin to Dumbarton an' steerage to Rothesay! There's variety for a workin' man; an' a' for the price o' steerage fare, tae! Diplomacy for ever! hoo——!"

But Johnny's indiscreet hooray was summarily checked by Mrs. Macfarlan dealing him a most vigorous and wind-displacing dunch on the ribs, at the same moment ordering Johnny to "haud his bletherin' tongue," and also to "tak" aff his auld specks, an' no' to sit glowerin' at the folks on the quay, "like some hamesucken weaver that had never been twa mile west o' Camlachie in his life."

"Ay, ay, Betty, lass," was Johnny's free rejoinder; "cabin passage to Dumbarton; I'd put up wi' a lot for that distinction," and putting past his specks he philosophically folded his "twa airms" and sat perfectly still till the starting of the steamer, a homely picture of easy circumstances and reposeful marriage bliss.

At length the hour of ten came round—tardily, as most things waited for do come—and Johnny, his spouse, and their numerous family were presently off on their annual Fair holiday doon-the-watter trip. What need to describe a sail down the world-famous Clyde. Every Glasgowegian is familiar with it, and knows well its every point of historic interest and scenic beauty, from the busy old Broomielaw to the sea-washed Cumbraes. After an eventful voyage of three hours and a half, Mrs. Macfarlan, and her family including Johnny and his Tam o' Shanter, were all safely deposited on the popular quay of Rothesay.

"Weel, there's nae penny to pay at the pier here, an' that's yae blessin' to a man wi' a numerous family," was Johnny's first remark.

"Pit on yer specks, Johnny, an' look oot for a 'FURNISHED ROOM TO LET' ticket; we'll need three beds intae't, ye ken," said Mrs. Macfarlan, when they had passed from the spacious pier to the streets.

Johnny at once adjusted his glasses, and forthwith proceeded to look up and down the streets and lanes with the inquiring scrutiny of a moneyed man about to make an extensive purchase of street property.

"Yonder's the vera thing, Betty," presently exclaimed our hero, directing the points of his three tied-up umbrellas at a microscopic attic fixed near the sky, seeing which, a nervous old gentleman, ensconced at the window directly below the said attic, suddenly shut down his window and disappeared like magic, thinking, doubtless, that Johnny, whom he obviously regarded as some drunken madman, was about to discharge a loaded gun at his head. The three tied-up umbrellas had evidently a formidable look.

"What! awa' up yonder, Johnny? No, no! we didna come doon here a' the road to roost in some Rothesay skylight like sparrows. We maun get intae a grun'-flat hoose;



no to be spendin' oor precious win' spielin' up nae end o' stairs."

"Here ye are, then," joyfully exclaimed Johnny, "here's the vera thing noo—a room on the grun'-flat. Let's gang in an' see what's what here."

So Johnny went in first to reconnoitre and cannily "spier" terms. In five seconds, however, he was out again, with a merry laugh on his face.

"Twenty-five shillings a week! an', by jing, a man could nae get room to whup a cat in't!"

"Twenty-five shillings a week for yae apartment!" breathlessly exclaimed Mrs. Macfarlan, "an' hoo mony beds?"

"Oh, lots o' beds, haill five o' them, nae less—twa set-in beds, a fauldin'-doon bed, a 'mak-up' bed on an auld sofa, an a 'shake-doon' bed on the floor. There's a variety o' beds for ye!"

"We'll gie that bargain the go-bye, Johnny, an' look for some place else."

And they did try somewhere else, for the space of two hours, and, at last, fairly out-wearied with the search, they fixed upon a small room, with the use of the kitchen, at one pound per week. Johnny had already seen so much comedy in the offers of "rooms" made him during his two hours' search, that he was able to hear, without swearing, the highly imaginative Highland landlady declare that the kitchen he had just taken was "weel stockit wi' tishes an' knives, an' forks," and that the room was "rale praw furnish." Regarding the cubic space at disposal, when a stout stranger entered the apartment it was filled, when he proceeded to hang up his hat it was crowded, when he sneezed it was confusion, and when he struck an easy attitude with his umbrella it was a dead block all round.

"Faith, Betty," humorously observed Johnny when they had all got squeezed in, "you an' I'll need to see an' no

cast oot while here, for there's scarcely room to fecht here without skinning the knuckles."

"Weel, weel, Johnny, we're doon the watter, onyway, that's yae consolation; besides, we need to dae little mair than merely sleep in't ye ken."

"Faith, an' I'm concerned aboot that same. I'm just half feared I'll hae to sleep wi' my legs in the lobby; an' between draughts o' chilly nicht air, an' late lodger's fa'in' owre my legs in the dark, the prospect's no particularly inviting. The situation to me, at least, is prophetic o' the rheumatics. Next 'Fair' we'll try the effect o' guid kintra air, Betty, east awa by Cum'slang or Camlachie, wi' sammon-trout fishin' in the Clyde, diversified wi' picturesque rambles roun' the coal-pits."

"Will ye haud yer provokin' tongue aboot that odious Camlachie! I just hate the mention o't!"

"Hoots, woman, ye're no up to time ava'. Are ye no aware we hae a member o' Parliament for Camlachie? I've a hauf notion to stan' for the district mysel'. Hoo wad this dae—Mr. John Macfarlan, Esq., M.P., Honourable Member for Camlachie?" and Johnny laughed heartily in the chair where he sat.

"Weel, when yince the tea's on the table we'll maybe thole to hear yer jokes, Johnny; but, meantime, I maun gang oot an' get in some groceries. But whaur's that new bannet o' mine? Weel, that's strange I had it on my heid twa minutes since, an' noo it's nowhere to be seen, up nor down!"

"The hoose is not that big, Betty; it shouldna be that faur astray. Look roun' again, it canna be oot the room."

"Well, that is strange," resumed the perplexed Mrs. Macfarlan, dropping mechanically into one of the two available chairs. "It's no hung up on a nail, it's no in either o' the twa beds, neither is it on the table, an' whaur it

really can be I canna even guess," and Mrs. Macfarlan sighed quite audibly.

"Neither can it be on ony o' the twa remaining chairs," added Johnny, "for 'tween you an' me they're baith occupied."

At the word "chairs" a quick suspicion seemed to seize the mind of Mrs. Macfarlan. Directing a sharp glance at Johnny's chair, she noticed, with a shriek of horror, the end of the blue ribbons of her grand new bonnet depending from underneath Johnny's posterior quarters, and flinging up both her hands, she screamed aloud, and knew no more! Johnny rose and looked at the chair whereon he had been sitting, on the seat of which was spread out, as flat's a veritable flounder, Mrs. Macfarlan's splendid new bonnet, fair crushed to stoor!

The situation was truly critical, Mrs. Macfarlan's new bonnet was practically extinguished, and she herself "cowpitt owre in a fent!" At once Johnny ran down to the shore for a jugful of "saut watter," with the intent of dashing it in the face of his overcome spouse, concluding, like the rest of the Glasgow folks, the "saut watter" to be a special specific for the cure of almost all diseases. Returning in great haste he was pleased to see Mrs. Macfarlan so far recovered as to be able to sit up in her chair. She had the unfortunate bonnet in her hand, and was all but weeping over its irreparable destruction.

"If it had even had the nine lives o' a cat they wad hae been fairly crushed oot o't," he heard her saying to herself as he abruptly thrust his head inside the door.

"Try a Tam o' Shanter next time, Betty," he exclaimed, breaking in on her pathetic soliloquy; "ye can then row yer bannet, like mine, intae a ba' an' stap it oot o' the road in yer pouch."

"Is that indeed you, ye destructive villain? whaur hae ye been, sir, tell me that this instant?"

"I was awa doon at the great Rothesay apothecary seein' if I could get ye some medicine, Betty, to bring ye back oot o' that fentin' fit ye took twa minutes since."

"What apothecary, Johnny?"

"The 'saut watter' apothecary, Betty; I've a jugfu' o' his medicine here; it costs naething, an' it's said to be worth much. The half o' this wat 'pill' dash't in yin's face nicht wauken even a corpse — no to speak o' a leevin' woman, merely in a fent!" And Johnny put down the jug on the table.

"Johnny Macfarlan, did ye actually mean to empty that jugfu' o' dirty shore-watter about my heid and face?"

"Dirty watter?" said Johnny, emphasizing the adjective to the point of a deliberate question.

"Ay, dirty watter!" as emphatically retorted his angry spouse.

"As true as death I did, Betty, dirty or clean!"

"Then I'll treat ye to a taste o' yer ain cure," rejoined Mrs. Macfarlan, and, springing to her feet, she seized the jug with the intention of treating Johnny's face to its contents.

Johnny, however, was too quick for her, and anticipating domestic war, he wedded instant action to lightning resolve, and backing towards the "jee'd" door, he hurriedly exclaimed—

"Ye've gotten 'lodgin's' a' richt, Betty; ye've the big half o' the purse in yer pouch; ye're recovered o' yer fell fent; an' as I'm something in the road I'll at yince clear oot o' this till next Friday; ta-ta!"

"Johnny Macfarlan, come back this minute, if ye've ony respect for the wife o' yer bosum."

"No this time, Betty, no this time; I'm owre old a domestic kittlin' to be tickled wi' a strae. I'm aff to Gleska! I'll see ye on Fair-Friday mornin'; ta-ta!" and wheeling right about our hero made speedy tracks for the steamboat

pier, where he found a fast river clipper on the point of starting for the up run to Glasgow.

“Faith,” thought Johnny, “that was a smart retreat—close order, an’ trail airns a’ the way! Mrs. Macfarlan ’ill be in a cooler skin by next Friday, I hope, when I’ll be doon for guid,” and making his way to the “neb” of the boat, so as to avoid cabin complications, he sat down to comfortably rest and perspire, deeply thankful in heart that his Tam o’ Shanter would cover, for at least four days to come, the whole o’ his family when drawn over his homely brows.

“Yes!” added Johnny to himself, by way of a climax, “there’s waur misfortunes in this world than the want o’ a big wife an’ a sma’ family, as a lot o’ workin’ men in Gleska ken this blessed day.”

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